

Journal of Industry-SUPPLEMENT.

ORATION, BY HON. FREDERICK DOUGLASS ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND ANNUAL EXPOSITION OF THE COLORED PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA, DELIVERED ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER FIRST, 1880.

[CONCLUDED FROM FOURTH PAGE.]

They could afford to leave them to the tender mercies of the soulless overseer who had no motives of kindness and good will toward them. Hence it became the interest of the slave so far as he reasoned upon the subject at all, to make the rich man poor, and the poor man poorer—for the poorer he could make them the nearer they would approach his own condition, and narrow the distinction between the master and the slave.

This, however, was not the worst element in the old relations of labor and capital, in your State. The very soil was accursed and made sterile by the presence of injustice and oppression. Oppression makes even a wise man mad, and the whole South to-day bears evidence of this madness. Slavery was ever the parent of anger and hate. In its presence your fields never were and never could be lovingly planted or faithfully cultivated. Things were done in the field which the eye of no overseer could detect. Hills were covered with clods in preference to pulverized soil, for the hand that planted cared nothing for the harvest. I say therefore that the abolition of slavery, was the liberation of the land as well as the liberation of slaves and their masters, and time will vindicate the assertion.

It is not only the bone, muscle and sinews of a country that enter into the cultivation of the soil of a country; but the mind and heart. In contemplating the successful cultivation of England, abounding as she does with wealth, an intelligent Frenchman remarks, "its not fertility but liberty," that makes England rich—and I believe that liberty will one day, make North Carolina rich. It was once cultivated for the benefit of the few, it is now cultivated for the benefit of the many; it was once cultivated under the fear of punishment; it is now cultivated by the hope of reward. It was once cultivated by ignorant slaves. It may now be cultivated by intelligent freemen. The one degraded labor by degrading the laborer, the other makes labor respectable, by making the laborers all equal before the law.

If this prophecy of prosperity to your state should fail or be slow of fulfillment, it will not be the fault of the former slave, but of the former master. It will not be due to liberty, but to the obstacles thrown in the way of the exercise of liberty. It will not be the fault of Israel Crossing the Red Sea, but the folly of Pharaoh, who would have bricks made without straw. There seems ever a disposition in men to drag something of the old into the new dispensation, to put new wine into old bottles and to mend old cloth with new, and this fault has been attempted here. This disposition is not confined to the masters, but to the freemen as well. A dog will scratch his neck even after the collar is removed. The illusion remains after the cause has departed; hence the world is constantly contending with superstition and anachronism. The South ever since the war has been illustrating this truth. Neither slave nor master has been able to adjust himself to his new condition. The slave cannot all at once rise to the full comprehension of the dignity of a freeman and drags along with him something of the old servility of his slavery, and the master drags something of the arrogance and contempt with which he formerly contemplated the slave into the new relation, and this is the trouble with the South to-day. To cut loose from the past and adjust yourselves to the present, to make the best of what is, and of what is inevitable, and irreversible, is the duty of the hour, and the sooner it is done the better for both.

I give you my warmest congratulations, upon the fact that I am here speaking to a peaceful multitude in North Carolina to-day. I congratulate you upon this exhibition and upon what it implies. I congratulate you upon the example you have here set to our whole people. You have gone to work like earnest men, fully believing in the future of our race. You have wisely availed yourselves of the well known principle and power of associated efforts of the wisdom of mutual cause and co-operation. You have dared in the face of your recent slavery and your destitution of means, to form an agricultural and mechanical association for the colored people of the

State of North Carolina. You have put yourselves in a position to profit by the knowledge and wisdom of the people among whom your lot is cast.

I am not sure, that had I been consulted I should have had the courage to have counselled the holding this exhibition. I should have been afraid of the thinness and poverty of the display. I think the result shows that you have been wise as well as brave. You have shown that you are not ashamed of your achievement, and like the great Oliver Cromwell, you are willing to be painted as you are.

By holding this exhibition you advertise and inform the world of your farewell to the past,—your departure from the moral, social and intellectual stagnation of a by gone condition and have taken up your line of march, with all the free peoples of the world, under the banner of liberty and progress.

I congratulate you again—and with increased emphasis, upon the auspicious point of time, at which you have entered upon this race of civilization. You have taken the tide at its flood. No century of human exertion has been crowded with so much that is valuable as this nineteenth century now drawing to a close. Agricultural and mechanical industries have reached a point undreamed of—even one hundred years ago. Invention and discovery have wrought wonderful changes in all the conditions of human life. You may now walk by night where an earlier generation walked by faith. Like a fortunate general you have come upon the field when victory is almost within your grasp. Your agricultural and mechanical implements are of world approved patterns. The tool and drudgery of ancient farming have vanished from the field. The heavy cradle which wore out your manhood and the sickle that beat your bodies to the ground have gone with the old times. The old fashioned hoe, broad, heavy and cumbersome, and the old plow with its wooden mold-board, which kept you constantly between the field and the blacksmith's shop are now no more. Science the noblest and grandest artificer of human welfare, the source and explanation of human progress, has been busy of late, in unfolding the nature of plants, soils and everything else. Even the weather has been shorn of its mystery, by dispelling its mystery. We have a man at Washington, who, without conjuration or magic, can tell you many hours in advance what storms are in the sky, and when and where they will spend their force and fury.

"It's time to cock your bay and corn." When the old Darkey blows his horn, has disappeared from the Almanacs, and we now look at the newspaper to know when we may plant and reap, or begin other work where the weather is a consideration. You have begun your work with light everywhere. You have only to open your eyes to see the essential conditions of successful exertion.

Fellow citizens, we have suffered as a race from two opposite causes. They are wanton disparagement on the one hand, and extravagant praise on the other. In what I have now to say I shall not, I trust ever on either side.

As a people and especially as a free people, we are to-day on trial. The question is asked by friends and by foes, and should be asked by ourselves, what is to become of the colored race in America? Will they advance or recede, will they rise or fall, survive or perish, die out as the Indians are dying out? It is a great question, and no body can answer, but ourselves.

Depend upon it we cannot stand still. We must advance or recede. Each generation must improve or degenerate. Even if we could hold on at the point of social well being in which we now find ourselves, the progress of the world about us would soon leave us far out of sight. To keep up, we must move on. To stand still is to retrograde.

It is not a very cheerful thought, but it is nevertheless a true one,—that we are to-day far in the rear of the white people, in knowledge, enterprise, business ability and wealth. We are in many ways wearing the old clothes of a by-gone generation of white people. The books we read, the sermons we preach, and the hymns we sing, and the tunes to which we sing them, we have borrowed from white men, who have gone before us. We have done little for science, little for invention or discovery.

We have neither scholars, statesmen nor poets. Though this is by no means our own fault, it is painful to admit it.

To come a little nearer home the question which our future has to answer, is, whether the colored man of this country is, what is, by his own

qualities as a man, or is he simply what he is, because he has been enslaved and degraded for centuries?

I believe that the latter is the true explanation and that time and events will prove it, but if it should after all turn out that our next generation shall be as far in the rear as we are to-day; if it shall be seen that we are still hanging on the verge of the white man's civilization; that we have made no appreciable advance upward, no amount of logic or learning will defend us from the contempt and scorn, due to a spiritless people. Men will think and say that the system of slavery has been unjustly treated, that the negro was better off in that relation than any where else. But if on the other hand, we supply the world with ample proof of our advancement, as believe we shall, then our light will break forth as the morning, and our health will spring forth speedily. Our innate civilizing qualities will be recognized and we shall be welcomed to the work of general improvement with the rest of mankind.

This then is the work to which you and I, and all of us have now to address ourselves. In scripture phrase we are to leave the things which are behind and press on to perfection. We are at the bar of the world of judgment. I cannot call it an impartial tribunal. It is, I think, not entirely free from prejudice. It has already formed and expressed an opinion and that opinion has been adverse to us. We shall have to do our very best to overcome that bias, and disprove that opinion. We are called upon to prove that, when left to ourselves, that we have within ourselves, the ability to compel nature to be our servant, and make for ourselves better conditions of existence.

I need not stop here to paint out the particular modes of action to be pursued, or the things to be done. You know them by heart. You know in the first place that you cannot make a hungry man happy, or an empty sack stand upright.

Money is said to be the root of all evil—to my mind the want of money is the root of very many evils. We are to-day dispirited more for our poverty than for our race or color. In this world Emerson says nothing succeeds so well as success. I do not doubt that it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom, but I know that it is not easy for a poor man to live in this world. A man must either support himself and surround himself with comfortable circumstances, or beg or steal, and neither of the latter invite respect.

We have been taught to believe that this world is of little account, and that we must turn our thoughts to another world. A better idea is: The best use we can make of any other world is, to make the best of this one first, because it comes first. He who fails to make use of the means of happiness in this world, gives but little reason to hope that he will improve his condition in any other world.

It is just as natural for men to acquire property as it is for a bird to build her nest or a bee to make honey. Thakery says that men are seldom so innocently employed as when making money. A man feels better and has more respect for himself when he has property than when he has none. I have read of a preacher who borrowed ten dollars every Saturday night, that he might be able the better to speak his mind in the pulpit on Sunday. We may pity the beggar who is a beggar by his own fault, but we cannot respect him for he does not respect himself.

Money, or stored labor, whether in the shape of money, lands or goods, is the secret and mainspring of civilization or what is called progress. Without property there can be no leisure, without leisure there can be no deep thought, without thought there can be no discovery, without discovery there can be no invention, and without invention there can be no civilization—and without civilization man remains the thrall of nature.

But the question is how shall the colored man in this country, doomed to toil with his hands for very small wages get money? The better question is rather, how shall he save his money? I know that it is hard to get money, and for the sake of the future of my people, I wish it were about as hard to spend it. Money is hard to get but easy to spend, and many of us make haste to spend every dollar, nearly as fast as it comes into our hands, and then go in debt to the grocery.

There is only one way to save money and that is not to spend it. Shake off all artificial appetites, deny yourself all needless decoration in dress and furniture. Save your money for a rainy day. If it does not come soon, all the better, you will have the more when it does come.

We have as a people, with all our defects, one important assurance of success. We can work. Slavery was a great evil but it did one good thing and that is it taught us to work. It hardened our muscles and trained us to regular industry. This is the staff of accomplishments. The earth yields as readily and as abundantly to black industry as to white.

WELL, WHAT ABOUT THE EXODUS?

I am charged with opposition to this remarkable movement. I am not ashamed of that opposition, if fairly stated. I think it will commend itself to the common sense of all. I believe that colored men, like all other men, have a perfect right to migrate, whenever and wherever they may think they can improve their condition by emigration, provided that they go upon their own suggestion and at their own expense; but if they call upon the public to spend their money and give their influence in support of their exodus, the public have a right to say whether they think the movement is wise or otherwise. I have thought the movement unwise, and no remedy for the manifold evils from which colored people suffer at the South. I have opposed it on many grounds; and largely on the ground that it is a wasteful and needless expenditure of time and money. "Rolling stones gather no moss."

"The men that made Rome worth going to see stayed there." It is sometimes better to bear the ills we have than fly to others we know not of. I have assumed that the evils from which we mostly suffer as a laboring class at the South are curable and temporary, and are measurably under the control of the colored people themselves. They certainly have some voice in fixing the price of their own labor. If the land owners combine, the laborers have a right to combine and insist upon living wages for honest work. If they cannot combine in the South, they cannot in the North, for the same causes that prevent union amongst us here will operate and prevent union there.

All new beginnings too, have their disadvantages. Three moves are said to be equal to one fire. There is always much waste and breakage in such moves. When you part with your pig, your pony and your little lot to go a thousand miles to look for a pig and pony, your money will be gone and your pig and your pony will not be easily replaced. Life is too short, time is too precious to be wasted in such experiments. Every new experiment is like infancy, it must have whooping cough, measles, etc., before maturity. Then, among whom are you going when you go to Indiana and Kansas? They are white people, friendly in part, I admit, but they are divided. There is antipathy and selfishness there as well as here. Capital there will want labor at the lowest rate of wages just as capital will want the same thing here.

The great advantage sought by this rush to the North is freedom from political persecution. I do not underrate our hardships in the South at this point. The evidence of its existence is overwhelming. Bad as it is however, it is temporary. It will soon be seen that the South cannot suppress a half a million of voters without great damage to itself and without any permanent benefits. The resentments and passions of the war must wear away, and these persecutions on account of political opinions will wear away with them.

But I cannot stop here to discuss this subject as it deserves to be discussed. It is a serious thing to ask you to leave a country where you have a monopoly of the supply of labor and go to a country where you will have to meet a multitude of competitors; to leave a country where your wants are few and go to a country where your wants will be many and hard to supply; to leave a climate to which you are adapted, to go to a climate to which you are not; to leave a country where you have prospective political power, and go to one where you will have no such power.

The argument that no people can ever rise to the dignity of freemen in the presence of the people who have enslaved and persecuted them, is not true. It is contradicted by the whole history of the world, and in this country in respect to ourselves as a people. Slavery once existed in nearly every State of this Union, and colored people have been oppressed and persecuted in every State of the Union. The time was when the colored man was hated and persecuted, even in Massachusetts, as he is now in some parts of the South, and when to speak a word in his behalf, would arouse the fury and provoke the violence of a mob. A colored man could not ride with others on his railways or highways or steamboats. They were not allowed aboard the wheel, but

all is changed there now and all will be changed here in the end.

The American people have made freedom the law of this land and all the people who expect to live peaceable and prosperous lives, under this Government, must sooner or later conform their conduct to this great law. The South is great but the Nation is greater.

For your encouragement, you should remember that you are not the only people who have been greatly persecuted and have risen superior to it. The Quakers, Baptists and Methodists have all been oppressed and persecuted among the very people by whom they are now respected. The Jews a hundred years ago were among the most oppressed and persecuted of men. They are now masters of the money bags of the world. The great Anglo Saxon race, now giving its language, its laws and its civilization to the whole world, only a few centuries ago, were the slaves of their Norman invaders and conquerors.

I advise you North Carolinians to remain in North Carolina. You can more easily make North Carolina what North Carolina ought to be, than make yourselves in Indiana what you desire to be. Your going there too may arouse against you much the same feeling of which you justly complain here.

Taking courage from what has been already done in our behalf, measuring the dark and dreadful depths from which we have come, considering the power and efficiency of the moral forces now employed in favor of human progress, the tendency of the nation, and our own elasticity and power of endurance, I cannot distrust or despair of the future.

This annual exhibition of the fruits of your industry here in Raleigh is a telling contradiction to the story that you cannot live and flourish on the soil of your birth, and the fact that I am here addressing you, is a fact of some significance considering the times and who and what I am and have been.

DEATH OF - 48. ALICE B. LEARY.

The intelligence of the death of the above estimable lady which occurred at the residence of her mother, on East Street, at noon Wednesday last, sent a shock of sadness and sorrow throughout the entire community. Mrs. Leary had come up from her home in Fayetteville to attend the Industrial Fair and to spend a few weeks with her relatives and friends. She seemed in unusual health and spirits when we last met her and gave promise of a long and happy future. But alas! "in the midst of life we are in death." Wednesday morning she rose in usual health with no premonitions of the sad, sad hour, so near at hand. While sitting at the breakfast table she was taken with a pain in her head and said to her mother that she thought the blood was rushing to her head. She was laid upon the bed and continued to grow worse and worse. Physicians were soon called in and did all that mortals could do to avert the sad end, but all in vain. About noon she passed from the labors of time to her eternal reward.

Mrs. Leary was born, if we mistake not, in the city of Wilmington and was in the 26th year of her age. She had lived in Raleigh from early childhood, to the winter of 1874, when, on December 9th, of that year, she was united in marriage to John B. Leary, Esq., of Fayetteville, where she has lived ever since. Like the Otey boys, from whose deaths we have hardly yet recovered, she was a companion of our early days and is associated with some of the dearest and purest moments of that happy period. To us the announcement of her death was as a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky. We were shocked, we were stricken. We feel too sad to say more. At a future time we shall try to add our tribute to her memory.